From the Director: Celebrate!

In many ways, I think of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education as an island of tranquility in the midst of turbulent waters. We live in challenging times. The United States is fighting two wars; Israel continues to face hostile enemies and is struggling to maintain its strong friendship with the U.S.; the national economy continues to struggle out of recession; and the Hebrew Union College is just beginning to embark on a New Way Forward as it moves out of the deepest financial crisis in its history.

Yet, at the RHSOE there is much to celebrate.

At the HUC Board of Governors meeting in March, the College inaugurated the Sara S. Lee Chair for an Emerging Scholar in Jewish Education and installed Tali Hyman Zelkowicz (’00) as its first occupant. This is the first time in the history of the College-Institute that an alumni group has played such an important role in raising the funds for an endowed chair. Our colleague Julie Vanek (JM, ’88) spearheaded the fundraising efforts that resulted in over 200 alumni making contributions to honor our teacher, Sara Lee. And then to have one of our own, Tali Zelkowicz, installed in that chair adds icing to an already sweet cake. The chair is an achievement of which we alumni can all be proud.

Another remarkable achievement is the result of the incredibly hard work of the students in the RHSOE. All of them will have essays published in the next issue of Torah at the Center, the URJ’s education periodical. Students are required to enroll in a class in the Sociology of Jewish Education (formerly known as Social Foundations) taught by Tali Zelkowicz. They begin the year writing a blog (a “cyber soapbox”) about an issue facing Jewish education about which they care passionately. Later in the term, they revisit the issue, doing research and writing a more carefully crafted “contribution to the field.” These contributions, honed over numerous drafts reviewed by peers and instructors, will be published later this spring. As a result, all of this year’s graduates will leave the RHSOE as published authors!

Finally, we can also celebrate the first stages of growth of the student body of the RHSOE. Ten students will be returning to Los Angeles from Jerusalem at the end of this academic year. This represents the largest class in many years. Another large class will be departing for Jerusalem this summer. And we are about to admit the largest cohort of DeLeT fellows since the program began almost a decade ago. The students in the RHSOE are passionate about Jewish life and Jewish learning, and they are eager to develop the personal and professional capacities that will prepare them to live “extraordinary lives” as Jewish educators (to paraphrase the new education brochure developed at HUC (which can be found at <www.huc.edu/academics/education/docs/Education%20Brochure.pdf>). Most of the successful applicants came to the RHSOE after an alum of the program or another colleague in Jewish education recommended that they consider a career in Jewish education.

We look forward to many more opportunities to celebrate the RHSOE in the weeks and months ahead. I hope that you, too, find reasons to celebrate in your personal and professional lives.

B’simcha,

Michael

The Alumni Association is thrilled to announce Lisa Langer (’94) will serve as our Alumna in Residence this fall.
From the Chairperson

Cindy Reich (’84)

The former space of the Tartak Learning Center on the lower level of 3077 University Avenue still has no windows. But on February 17, the space was filled with light and energy. Twenty-three members of the Rhea Hirsch Alumni Association Leadership Team gathered in Los Angeles, most in person and two through the wonders of technology, to examine where we are as an Association and where we should be heading. The meeting demonstrated the talent and intelligence of our alumni, along with their tremendous dedication to the Rhea Hirsch School and its vision. Commenting on the meeting Lynn Flanzbaum (’05) said, “I was absolutely blown away by what I saw.”

Guided by our mission statement, the Leadership Team addressed matters such as communication, leadership development, and community building. Our deliberations focused both on how we do our work as well as on the kind of work we do. We heard about the RHSOE Alumni Association website that is under construction. We talked about how to capture and publicize the contributions our alumni are making to Jewish education, and about ways we can honor alumni as they enter retirement. We generated ideas for cultivating community throughout our growing alumni network, and for promoting the use of that network for professional learning and support.

I want to say thank you to all the alumni who participated in the meeting. And thanks to our professional staff, Debbie Niederman and Joy Wasserman, for the intelligent and sensitive ways in which they help guide our work. Thank you to Michael Zeldin for his amazing leadership of the Rhea Hirsch School and for his partnership with the Alumni Association. We welcome the involvement of RHSOE alumni from across the generations. If you have ideas, suggestions, comments, feedback — please be in touch <reichcin@aol.com>. If you have some time you’d like to devote to supporting the RHSOE, please let us know.

The work of the RHSOE Alumni Association provides opportunities for ongoing professional growth, networking and promoting the work of Jewish educators and Jewish education. Please don’t wait to be invited to join in our work… Let us know you’re interested and we’ll help you find a meaningful way to participate.

We encourage you to get involved in the Association through one of its many working groups: Social Media, Communication, Membership, Development, Recruitment, Membership Outreach, Sustaining Alumni Education, Honorary Doctorate, Educator in Residence/Alum in Residence. We are continually looking for people to be involved in these groups to serve our members, the Rhea Hirsch School and the College.

Please contact Debbie Niederma <dniederman@huc.edu> to let us know how you wish to be involved.

Subscribe to HUC News

Do you want to keep up with news about the College-Institute? Sign up for the HUC-JIR Weekly Digest, a weekly e-mail of the latest news and events from HUC-JIR, by going here:

http://www.huc.edu/newspubs/signup/
Happenings of the Alumni Association

Debbie Niederman (‘93)
RHSOE Alumni Affairs Coordinator

It is always a pleasure to be able to gather in person with fellow alumni and in the past two months, we have had that pleasure on two occasions. Let me share a few thoughts with you from our latest gathering… The sun was barely up, but more than 20 alumni were up and gathered for our annual Alumni breakfast at the NATE conference. (For those of you who are “old timers,” you may think we are getting soft as we now gather at the later hour of 7:30 a.m.!) It was a rich gathering where we celebrated our history, shared a bit of our emerging story, and, as we do each year, affirmed our mission statement. Those present shared feedback about our Alumni Association; how are we doing in relation to our mission and how are we doing in terms of serving the real needs of our alumni. Several alumni expressed eagerness to find a way to get involved with our working groups. PLEASE KNOW that if you are interested in working on behalf of our association, please don’t wait to be invited. We need your help and are eager to find a role for you. Please contact me if you have an idea for a project or if you would like to join one of our working groups. We would love to have EVERYONE involved!

Here are our current working groups and what each one is involved in:

1. Development:
   Julie Vanek (‘88) — We were thrilled to celebrate the inauguration of the Sara S. Lee Chair for an Emerging Scholar in Jewish education. Thank you to EVERYONE who contributed to this remarkable campaign!

2. Educator and Alum-in-Residence:
   Debra Sagan Massey (‘99) and Lesley Silverstone (‘86) — They are working on selecting our next Alum in Residence for the fall of 2010. We look forward to announcing which alum will join this list of previous alumni/scholars:
   • Jane West Walsh (‘85)
   • Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz (‘77)
   • Robert Tornberg (‘75)
   • Julie Vanek (‘88)
   • Cindy Reich (‘84)
   • Mindy Davids (‘90)

3. Honorary Doctorates:
   Barry Lutz (‘84) and Audrey Friedman Marcus (‘76) — Are currently reviewing the materials from the class of 1986 to make recommendations for the 2011 honorees.

4. Kallah:
   Shaina Wasserman (‘06) Stacey Delcau (‘01) and Karen Strok (‘00) — Put together a remarkable Day of Learning this past February with Dr. Isa Aron as our scholar. Whether you were able to attend or not, an email with learning resources will be coming out shortly so that we can all continue exploring what it means to be visionary in a time of change.

5. Membership:
   Sharon Amster Brown (‘00), Beth Young (‘02) and Jane West Walsh (‘85) — Are working to develop news ways of connecting with current students and connecting all alumni. Look from new initiatives from them shortly!

6. Rabbinic-Education Alumni:
   Beth Nichols (‘05) — Continues to develop ideas for serving this important alumni group.

7. Recruitment:
   Lori Sagarin (‘84) and Debra Cotzin Kellner (‘04) — Are working hard with our LA Campus Recruitment Director, Debbie Shapiro to recruit students for future classes. It is important to note that all the students who were accepted for the Fall 2010 school year were recruited by our own alumni!

8. Social Media:
   April Akiva (‘06) and Melissa Buyer (‘00) — Have now created a Facebook fan page. If you’re not yet a fan of the RHSOE Alumni Association, go to <www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Rhea-Hirsch-School-of-Education-Alumni-Association/183963498694?ref=mf> and join us!

9. Sustaining Alumni Education:
   Tamara Lustgarten-Gropper (‘94) and Renee Rubin Ross (‘99) — Are re-envisioning how we continue our conversations we began in school across the generations and finding ways to keep renewing our lifetime warranty. Watch for MANY new opportunities in the near future and check out the articles and research suggestions in each issue of E-Tikshoret.

10. Website:
    Michelle Shapiro Abraham (‘96) — along with HUC staff — are working on an alumni webpage. It is in the design phase and we hope to have it launched and full of useful information soon.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me <dniederman@huc.edu> if you have any questions, suggestions or if you wish to get involved! Please don’t wait to be invited — we want and need you engaged in the work of our association!
This is a day I could hardly have imagined in my wildest dreams. To have an academic chair in my honor at the Hebrew Union College is not only a tribute to my work, which I accept with great humility and gratitude, but it is a testimonial to the alumni of the Rhea Hirsch School and all the extraordinary achievements of the school, its faculty and its students over a period of 40 years.

We are often fond of saying that our alumni are our most outstanding products. They are visionaries and dreamers who have transformed and continue to change the face of Jewish education; they are exemplars of the highest standards of the profession they have chosen and serve as models for the new colleagues as they enter the field; they are extraordinarily proud of and loyal to the Rhea Hirsch School and the Hebrew Union College and care deeply about the future of both; and they never fail to set new aspirations and challenges for themselves, not matter what the obstacles.

The Sara S. Lee Chair is a wonderful expression of many of the attributes I have mentioned. The alumni undertook to raise the funds for this chair in 2007, to mark my retirement as director of the school. With the guidance and support of HUC’s development professionals they had raised almost $900,000 by the time of the retirement dinner. This was a prodigious effort and a singular achievement for a small alumni group of less than 300 Jewish educators. They left no stone unturned.

To arrive at today and the dedication of this chair we are also grateful to David Ellenson, overseers and governors of HUC, and members of the HUC administration who completed this effort in record time. When I think of the manner in which my work of 27 years as director of the RHSOE really matters and touches the future it is through these wonderful alumni.

It is therefore more than fitting that the person who will occupy this chair as an emerging scholar is Rabbi/Dr. Tali Hyman Zelkowicz, one of our very own alumni. From those wonderful days when Tali sat in my classes as an education student and asked the most interesting questions, as well as suggesting entirely new ways to think about the big issues in Jewish education, I knew she was destined for greatness. Her insightfulness and intuition, combined with her profound intellectual gifts, will lead to new breakthroughs in scholarship in Jewish education. We already see how she is challenging conventional thinking about identity formation and education. I am thrilled she will sit in the chair that bears my name. I cannot think of anyone more worthy.

When I thought about what to share with all of you about my story I was fortunate to find an interesting introduction in the most recent issue of Sh’mat. Barry Shrage, President of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston, introduces his essay in that issue with a quote from Howard Gardner’s book, Leading Minds.

The ultimate impact of the leader depends most significantly on the particular story that he or she relates or embodies. Leaders tell stories about themselves and their groups, about where they are coming from and where they are headed, about what is to feared, struggled against and dreamed about. The most basic story has to do with issues of identity. And so it is the leader who succeeds in conveying a new version of a given groups’ story, who is likely to be effective.

This, then, is the story I have tried to convey and embody as director of the Rhea Hirsch School. In order for Jews to build compelling communities where Jews can grow, express their Judaism both individually and collectively in rich and creative ways, and aspire to achieve new visions for Jewish life and a better world, Jewish education must be the foundation on which they build their aspirations and translate them into reality. As such, Jewish education must be, by definition, excellent, grounded in deep Jewish knowledge, capable of generating passion and commitment to Judaism and the Jewish people, and able to speak to the issues and questions of our time.

What have I chosen to challenge and to warn against in order to bring into reality such Jewish education for our institutions? I have undertaken to question opinions and assumptions that many hold about Jewish education and have encouraged my students and colleagues to do so as well. Furthermore we have seized opportunities to create initiatives, public discourse and programs to
Tali Zelkowicz, March 22, 2010

Please allow me a moment of personal thanks and acknowledgments. I want to take this opportunity to thank my parents, Shirley and Aubrey, who surprised me and showed up in LA yesterday from Vancouver, because they wanted to be here in person. And thanks to Benny's parents who are watching us on line right now from Pittsburgh. And most of all, thank you to my partner, Benny, who somehow gets it all, and gets me, thank you for being here and for being you.

Today marks an immense and exciting milestone. For me, personally, this is, of course, significant in some very deep and moving ways which I will soon try to describe and share with you.

But before that, and really above and beyond the personal significance, the Sara S. Lee Emerging Scholar for Jewish Education Chair is, first and foremost, the remarkable achievement of the mighty and miraculous alumni of the RHSOE, who were able to imagine and realize this ambitious and visionary goal. It is significant to so many people in the field, people not yet in the field, and even to people who are not even born yet.

For what the establishment of this Chair represents, is no less than the confidence in, and deep genuine respect for Education as an academic field, for Jewish Education as a sub-field, and, for emerging scholars as a cherished resource. Sara has known painfully how all three have been dreadfully under-valued historically. Indeed, for all of us in education, it has been heartrending and at times depressing, to live this truth. So what we celebrate here today at HUC, is an extraordinary and astonishing milestone in the lifecycles of Education, Jewish Education and Emerging Scholars. In one remarkable career, Sara Lee has lifted all three of them up. And she has done so with her unwavering and characteristic genius, her brilliant leadership, and with her professional chutzpah never to settle for anything less than excellence in all that she touches.

I assure you, in ways that we that are aware of and not aware of, we are all beneficiaries to what Sara has built, created, and inspired, all with her exquisite and prescient vision.

And in fact, a big reason I am standing here, is a result of Sara's clear and powerful vision. About 10 years ago to the day, the reason I sought to pursue a career as a Jewish education academic, was because of Sara's vision of the field…but also because of her vision for me. I am truly awed and not a little exhausted thinking about all that Sara has taught me, all the ways in which she has shaped me, and all the vistas she has opened up for me over the past decade. Sara knows, as I've gotten to share it with her over the years, how her belief and confidence in me, have empowered me so far beyond anyone I ever thought I could be. For that alone, I could certainly say, Dayeinu. Thank you, Sara. But there's more, so much more.

Sara leads, teaches, supervises and mentors with a crystal sharp clarity of vision that is at once supportive and intensely challenging; it is simultaneously inspiring and daunting. She leads with such a strong sense of values, ideals, purpose and mission, and is able to articulate any part of it at any moment with powerfully compelling logic and passion: this, too, is the gift and power of Sara S. Lee.

In fact, I can even share with you a concrete example of Sara's laser sharp vision. Thanks to an HUC education faculty meeting that took place in Palo Alto recently, I happened to be assigned to a working team that Sara led. Our group was assigned to review a section of our Jim Joseph grant, and in the midst of a very tachlis discussion of mapping out course content, and scope and sequence, Sara happened to mention, by the by, her hopes for the future of what Jewish education will look like. My ethnographic instinct kicked in, and I recorded her words verbatim. Here is what she said:

My hope for the future of what Jewish education will look like entails a “[fusion] of passion and vision, tied together with copious amounts of rigorous thinking. You know, passion and vision will be connected in some real way.

There is a whole lot packed into those few words, and you can witness it happening in Education classes here continued on page 6
demonstrate that such assumptions and opinions need not inhibit us from shaping a very different future for Jewish education.

For some time, Jewish education was low priority on the communal as well as institutional agendas. This reality was grounded in an essential cynicism about the potential of Jewish education to succeed in building community and motivating Jews. Other avenues and means were deemed to be the path to success in insuring Jewish continuity, however that might be understood. We have both affirmed and demonstrated through our work with congregations and day schools that when Jewish education is given high priority and the most gifted professional and lay leadership is brought to the task, Jewish education can be powerful, have long lasting impact and can shape the kinds of communities that inspire. Often, Jewish education as a profession has not been regarded as sufficiently prestigious and significant to motivate young Jews, their families and even communal leaders to consider it as one of the most important roles that an individual can play in shaping the Jewish future. By word and deed, I and my colleagues have demonstrated through our students and alumni that not only is this a noble profession, worthy of serious consideration; but one that can transform the nature of Jewish communal life. We have done so by nurturing generations of Jewish educators who by word and deed demonstrate the supreme significance of their role and the difference their leadership can make in Jewish institutional life. Jewish education as a field of study is not often thought of as rigorously intellectual, probing essential questions and transcendent issues. The Rhea Hirsch School has challenged such an understanding by creating an educational program and culture that prizes the life of the mind, the pursuit of new knowledge and the dissemination of this new knowledge to the larger Jewish world.

If these are the realities and assumptions I have encouraged us to challenge and struggle against, what has been the vision I have held for the Rhea Hirsch School and conveyed as the group’s story. It is a vision where deep Jewish knowledge and learning, passion for the Jewish people, belief that there is a better future for Jewish education and Jewish life, and confidence that we can make it happen are at the center. It is a story of the belief that there is always something better we can aspire to and that change is possible, captured best in a quote by Michael Walzer in his book *Exodus and Revolution* especially appropriate at this time of year.

---

*Sara Lee continued from page 4*

---

*Tali Zelkowicz continued from page 5*

---

In fact, Michael Marmur, you captured it so well for me in our conversation last week, when you described how it would be a huge privilege to receive any Chair as a junior faculty member, but to be appointed to the Sara S. Lee Chair, that is an astounding honor. In a less formal setting, I would say, it freaks me out a bit!

Because if you know Sara at all, and we do, this Chair is “kiseh ram v’nisa.” If I am to strive to embody even some of Sara’s extraordinary talents, I have a lot of emerging to do. But I am up for the challenge and, with Michael and Isa’s unending support, guidance and wisdom, I will do everything I can, with all my heart, all my soul and with all my might, to build upon your great vision, Sara, and prepare the way for the next Sara S. Lee Emerging Scholar in Jewish Education.

---

*Sara Lee continued from page 4*

---

*Sara Lee continued from page 4*

---

*Sara Lee continued from page 4*

---

*Sara Lee continued from page 4*

---

*Sara Lee continued from page 4*

---

*Sara Lee continued from page 4*

---

*Sara Lee continued from page 4*
First; wherever you live, it is probably Egypt; second, there is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land; and third that the way to the land is through the wilderness. There is no way to get from here to there except by joining and marching.

It is also a story of commitment to excellence even when the going gets rough and people would urge us be less ambitious or perhaps settle for less. The story is one of passion for what we do because we consider it of utmost importance. It is finally a story about people, and how together in pursuit of a vision, they can achieve amazing things.

I would hope that this group story has inspired the kind of dedication that has led to this day when we dedicate this chair. I am confident that my colleagues, Dr. Michael Zeldin, the current director of the Rhea Hirsch School, Dr. Isa Aron and Dr. Tali Zelkowicz will continue to build on this vision, add new chapters to our story as the Rhea Hirsch School. And it is my great hope that our story will inspire new generations of students to challenge what needs to be challenged and change that which needs to be changed to create a rich and vital future for the Jewish people.

It is now my honor to invite Dr. Tali Hyman Zelkowicz, who will be the occupant of the Lee Chair for an Emerging Scholar, to share her thoughts on this special occasion.

---

BOOK REVIEW

ReThinking Synagogues: A New Vocabulary for Congregational Life

By Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman (Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006)

Reviewed by Marci Dickman ('82)

Rabbi Hoffman challenges us to think differently. He places us on the curb of a dying era; we are crossing the street and about to step up onto the curb of a new era. While he clearly spells out the current doom and gloom for synagogue life, his chidush is in the exciting opportunity he presents before us. As educators, he challenges us to be a part of the thinking that expands the sacred space we have been attempting to create in our schools to the whole of the synagogue, so that sacred community can be our goal.

Hoffman challenges assumptions and brings forward research findings that contrast the American Jewish community of the 1950’s and 60’s with our communities today. He writes about Jewish ethnicity that nourished the parents of the baby boomers who built synagogues in the suburbs with school wings and social halls to educate children and hold amazing programs. He describes the changes in thinking required as our community passes power from baby boomers to Gen X and provides for Gen Y. He describes “sacred capital” and what we can do to measure what we build when the focus is not merely on numbers and programming.

The centrality of our synagogues is as gathering places (Beit Knesset) whose purpose is building sacred community. Here, with a deep focus on theology that drives both thinking and decision-making, we can create synagogues that provide “authentic Jewish substance,” communities which take seriously their relationship with God and their responsibilities to create a just world. Thus a sacred community speaks and thinks about theology, prays, and acts with concern for its members and for the extended communities around it.

While Hoffman includes the educators among the decision-makers and key participants in reinventing the synagogue, it is up to us to pose and respond to the next questions. Sacred communities are built on sacred relationships. What can we do to structure our schools to encourage conversations, learning and activities that further the development of caring interactions? How can these interactions then build a sense of belonging and commitment, which can allow individuals to seek and find evolving meaningful responses? How will it change our educational thinking to consider Hoffman’s key components of adult “meetings” in synagogues, namely, prayer, eating, study, action and check-in? Does the hierarchical structure of schooling hamper the development of sacred community in our educational work as Hoffman argues that it (Taylor’s machine-like bureaucracy) “runs counter to all the values synagogues ought to hold dear?”

If strengthening the impact of our Jewish educational endeavors requires creating and changing the conversation about the synagogue, Hoffman puts forward a convincing and powerful case to step back and look, to rethink the needs of our Jewish community and its key institutions, and to challenge ourselves to place sacred community at the center of how and what we do as Jewish educators.
Translating and Transforming

A message from the Vice-President for Academic Affairs Dr. Michael Marmur

In the ancient synagogue in the Land of Israel, a special place was reserved for the meturgaman. His task was to translate the words of Torah from Hebrew, which was not the common language of the people, to Aramaic, which was their preferred language (just like Mel Gibson).

In the process of translating the words of the sacred text, the translator would add interpretations and stories to bring the Torah alive. In many ways, the work done every day in hundreds of congregations, schools, institutions and other forums by the graduates of HUC-JIR continues the legacy of the meturgaman. Our cantors, educators, communal professionals, rabbis and scholars are all engaged in acts of translation.

One of the greatest translators in Jewish history was Samuel ibn Tibbon. Some 800 years ago he described the situation of the translator as being similar to that of the ass in the famous Bible story of Balaam, squeezed between two walls. On one side, the original text demands to be treated with respect and understanding. On the other side, the translator needs to demonstrate expertise in the ways of the world. She needs to know how to speak to reach people where they are.

This is perhaps the core challenge we face as we learn and teach at HUC-JIR. Our beloved graduates, you among them, are in a tight spot. You face the awesome task of being true to millennia of Jewish wisdom, and also to the realities of today. Too far one way, we may lose relevance. Too far the other, we risk losing significance.

Last July, I became the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. It is a daunting task to step into the shoes of Norman Cohen, who made such an immense contribution to the College-Institute from the late '90s. Luckily for me, the name of the position was changed, so it may take longer before people notice that I am in essence fulfilling that role. I have a number of other advantages. The Directors of our various Schools and Programs, my fellow Vice-Presidents, the incomparable David Ellenson, our students, governors, alumni and supporters all contribute in very significant ways to ensure that we continue to produce translators who are equal to the task at hand.

Recently, it has been pressure of a different kind that has been squeezing all of us. The role RHSOE alumni have played in helping us craft a vision for the future and then making it happen has been truly extraordinary, and I want to thank all of you for your partnership, loyalty, generosity and creativity. We are emerging from a period of crisis, and I now have an opportunity to think about some key issues relating to learning and teaching at HUC-JIR.

I have a very full ‘To Do’ list — it includes a range of initiatives and committees and discussions, but behind all the bureaucracy there are some core questions. I stay up late at night, both because the time difference between Jerusalem and the rest of the HUC world leaves me no choice, and because I am constantly thinking about what we should be doing to produce the very finest translators, graduates of our various programs. Here are some of the issues we face:

• **Continuing Alumni Education:** we have been forced to step back from some of our programs in this area for budgetary reasons, but in my mind the only way we can be true to our mission is to see ourselves as teaching to a 60-year curriculum. We want to be in conversation with our alumni, helping them grow as they help us constantly refine and redefine our mission.

• **Technology:** we have the potential to be much greater than the sum of our individual campuses and programs, if only we can utilize some of the new learning technologies in interesting ways. I do not have blind faith in gadgets, but I’m convinced we can increase our capacity and relevance by learning how to use this stuff well. Some of this is already being planned.

• **Curricular Integration:** we need to continue the process of integrating the different pieces of the HUC experience. There is an innate tension between our various agendas: we want to teach academic classes, and relate to the personal, professional and spiritual...
development of our students. We want every graduate of every program to excel in every area, but we know that this is not a realistic goal. We need to prioritize and to integrate, concentrating on what matters most and finding points of contact and resonance between these different spheres.

There’s more (you can ask Joy Wasserman, who once caught a glimpse of my somewhat comical ‘To Do’ Excel spreadsheet), but that should be enough to give you a sense of the agenda. Our various stakeholders are all playing their part to ensure that we emerge from our recent institutional challenges in a vigorous and focused way. There is much work to be done to ensure that the Jewish world gets the leadership it both needs and deserves.

I see you, readers of Tikshoret, RHSOE alumni, as master translators. You enable Jews here and now to orient and enrich their lives in conversation with Jews of every generation and background. You are engaged in writing the next chapters of our unfolding story. I hope you will continue to work with us here at the College-Institute, and that we can continue to be a relevant address for you. I invite each and every one of you to stop by my office in the Rau Building of HUC/Jerusalem. I’d love to meet you and hear your reflections about what the College-Institute ought to be doing to ensure that new generations of translators go out and transform Jewish life.

Each of you is a meturgaman. Each of you brings Torah alive. In saluting you, I invite you to be part of the process which continues to unfold at HUC-JIR.

A Letter from the LA Campus Dean

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Rhea Hirsch Alumni Association has been a valuable asset and ally to the Los Angeles campus, not only in advancing projects specific to the support of the School of Jewish Education, but also in representing the interests of our campus over the course of this most difficult 18 month period. I am personally most grateful to you for your leadership in supporting our faculty, students and administration.

Clearly, as we approach the end of the current academic year, HUC-JIR is a stronger place structurally and financially than we were just nine months ago. There are many exciting developments that have and will take place to further stabilize and grow our core programs. Many of these are already known to you, while others will be shared with you in the course of the next several months.

Your financial support was essential to our success in raising funds to establish the Sara Lee Chair. Having Dr. Tali Zelkowicz appointed as our recipient has special meaning to Sara and to our entire campus community. We are most grateful for your leadership and assistance in advancing this project.

The generous level of support of the Jim Joseph Foundation has added to the strength and significance of the Rhea Hirsch School. Michael Zeldin’s wise and creative leadership is one of the extraordinary assets that now define the Los Angeles campus, as he effectively repositions the RHSOE through an array of professional and academic initiatives.

Personally, having had occasion to teach many of our “joints” and to have had the opportunity to work with a number of Rhea Hirsch alumni, I am constantly impressed with the creativity and passion that define the graduates of this school. Over the years ahead, I look forward to maintaining my personal connections with many of you and to have the opportunity to learn from each of you.

As Professor Josh Holo assumes the mantle of leadership for our campus as our new dean, I know that he will find your loyalty and engagement with the LA campus as one of the special assets.

Thank you for your support and commitment! I truly treasure my many friendships and associations with the Rhea Hirsch School. May you each go from strength to strength, touching the lives of those whom you teach and lead.

All good wishes,

Steven Windmueller, Dean
Josh Whinston ('07) and his wife Sarah Raful Whinston (SJCS '05) happily announce the birth of Mollie Helen on February 26.

Jane West Walsh ('85) and her husband, Rabbi Ariel Walsh (New York '96) are happy to report the birth of their new grandchild — a beautiful little girl — Camden Ruth Walsh — born Friday, March 12.

Don't be shy. Please email us your personal and professional updates to share with fellow alumni at tikshoret@huc.edu

Melissa ('02) and Mike Werbow ('04) on the birth of their son, Lev Aiden. Lev was born on Friday morning, April 2nd.

Current rabbinic-education student Ilana Mills ('10), her husband Colby are happy to announce the arrival of their newest family member, a healthy little boy. Caleb Mills arrived Sunday, April 4.

Honorary Doctorate Recipient

Our fellow alum, Larry Tishkoff, received his Honorary Doctorate in November on the Jerusalem campus. Mazel tov to Larry on your 25 years of dedicated service to the Jewish people.

LARRY TISHKOFF
Consecrated educator,
Who, as Assistant Director of NFTY Youth Programs in Israel, contributed to its tremendous growth and vitality
Whose passionate commitment to the Land and People of Israel was the impetus for his aliyah
Who, as a founding member of Garin Arava, Kibbutz Yahel and the founding director of Yahel Sinai Tours, introduced thousands of Reform Jewish youth to the ideals and practices of Reform Judaism in Israel
Who, as the Senior Representative of the Jewish Agency for Israel on the West Coast as Shaliach Aliyah to the Western USA, and as Director of the Los Angeles Israel Aliyah Center, counseled hundreds of families as they prepared to make aliyah
Producer of “Israelis by Choice,” a film highlighting American Jews who chose to live in Israel
And as Missions Manager in the United Jewish Communities Missions Department in Jerusalem, uses his educational skills and knowledge of Eretz Yisrael to design and implement itineraries for federation delegations on missions to Israel

DOCTOR OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, honoris causa
Jerusalem, Israel
November 20, 2009 • 3 Kislev 5770

RHSOE Executive Committee 2009-2010/5770

Chair
Cindy Reich

Past Chair
Julia Berger

Vice Chair
Ellen Lefkowitz

National Director of Alumni Affairs
Joy Wasserman, ex-officio

RHSOE Coordinator of Alumni Affairs
Deborah Niederman, ex-officio

Director of the RHSOE
Michael Zeldin, PhD, ex-officio

RHSOE Representatives to the HUC–JIR Council of Alumni Associations
Lisa Langer
Rachel Margolis

Alumna Representative to the Board of Governors
Julie Vanek

Communications Chair
Tamara Lawson Schuster

RHSOE Executive Committee 2009-2010/5770